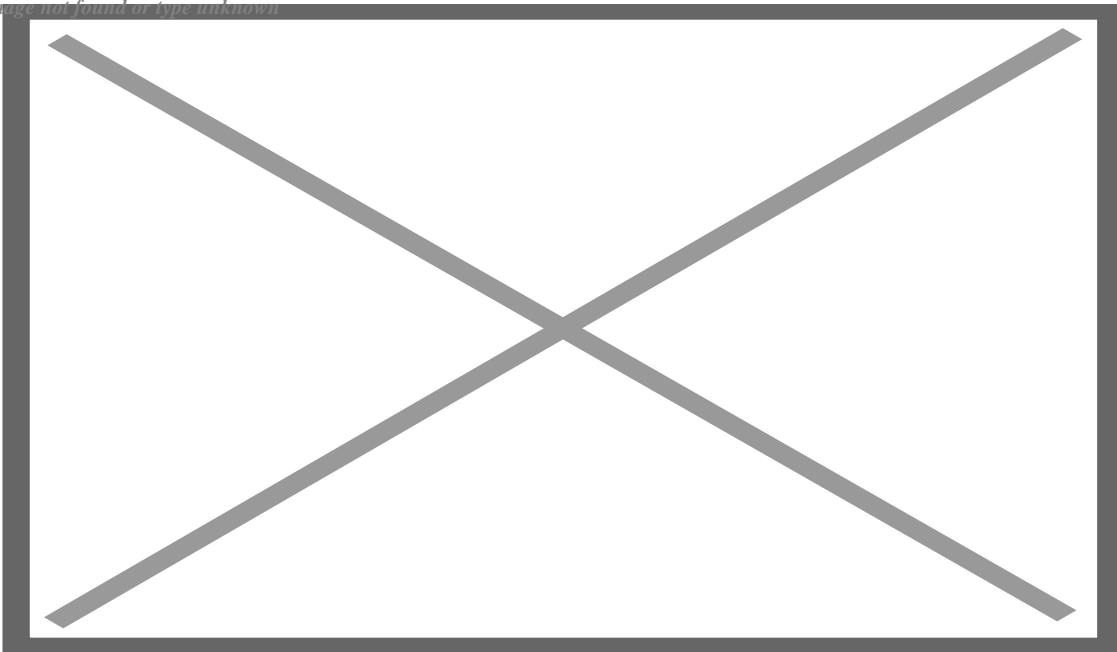


Brazilian president Lula returns scientific merit medals withdrawn by Jair Bolsonaro

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Adele Benzaken and Marcus Vinícius Lacerda received back the medals of the National Order of Scientific Merit. | Photo: Agência Brasil

Brasilia, July 13 (RHC)-- Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva handed back the medals of the National Order of Scientific Merit to Brazilian experts, which had been revoked by former president Jair Bolsonaro.

Health physician Adele Benzaken and infectiologist Marcus Vinícius Lacerda received the medals of the National Order of Scientific Merit from the hands of the Brazilian head of state. Lula da Silva said that "we are gathered here today to say loud and clear: no more obscurantism. No more denialism. No more throwing scientists to the bonfires, no longer those of the Middle Ages, but those that are lit on the Internet and in the radical groups of our society with lies and hate speeches."

Likewise, the Brazilian dignitary pointed out that "Brazil no longer deserves to have its institutions degraded," and informed that the National Council of Science and Technology (CCT), extinguished during Bolsonaro's mandate, will be resumed.

Adele Benzaken, who was director of the Health Ministry's HIV/AIDS Department, was fired in the first year of Jair Bolsonaro's administration in 2019, when she published a material on disease prevention in trans men. For his part, Marcus Vinícius Lacerda signed a study that proved the ineffectiveness of chloroquine in the treatment against COVID-19, in 2020.

However, both researchers were excluded from the homage to be paid to personalities in 2021, when, after their names were published in a list, Bolsonaro decided to exclude them. At that ceremony, former President Bolsonaro presented himself and former Minister of Economy Paulo Guedes with awards recognizing Brazilian and foreign personalities for their contributions to the development of science in Brazil.

Other scientists who had been recognized refused the award as a sign of solidarity and protest against the government administration of the Bolsonarist right wing.

During the ceremony that reversed Bolsonaro's decision, President Lula da Silva affirmed that the symbolism of the event goes beyond a formal act.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/internacionales/328319-brazilian-president-lula-returns-scientific-merit-medals-withdrawn-by-jair-bolsonaro>



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